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Faith in Research Annual Conference 2016

REV RUTH DOWSON

POSTER

RESEARCHING THE PARISH:
A VIEW FROM ORDINATION TRAINING TO PUBLICATION

1

About the Researcher

- ▶ Exploring vocation (2007-09)
- ▶ In training (2009-12)
- ▶ As curate (2012-present)
- ▶ Previously Event Manager
- ▶ Researcher, Academic (2007-present)
UK Centre for Events Management
Leeds Beckett University
- ▶ PhD student (2013-present)
'Eventization of faith: A case study'

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Timeline of research on parish & church

- ▶ 2004: New Vicar, Rev Keith Dunnett; begins vision process; 5-year plan agreed. Tracey McPhee (member of the congregation) undertakes research as part of Foundation Degree assessment at Kadugli.
- ▶ 2008: RD undertakes same assessment as part of Foundation Degree at Kadugli; research builds on Tracey's questionnaire and results.
- ▶ 2010: April Rev Keith Dunnett leaves St John's.
- ▶ 2011: September Completion of Community Rooms EXTEND Building project
- ▶ 2011: November New Vicar, Rev Vaughan Pollard.
- ▶ 2012: RD – MA dissertation research using St John's Clayton as one of the case study churches. 'The role of events in church culture: an examination of three Bradford churches.'
- ▶ 2013: PCC produces Business Plan for Community Rooms to support funding bid
- ▶ 2013: Church leadership focus on 'FrontLine', LICC evangelism programme
- ▶ 2014: RD MA dissertation research published.
Dowson, R. (2014) 'Religion, Community and Events' in Jepson, A. & Clarke, A. (Eds.) (2014) Exploring Community Festivals and Events. Advances in Events Management Series. Abingdon: Routledge
- ▶ 2015: LYCIG Local programme undertaken following instruction at diocesan level
- ▶ 2012-2016: RD speaker at international conferences across Europe using research

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About the Parish of Clayton

- ▶ 1066: Saxon farming settlement, Claitone 'Farmstead on Clay'
- ▶ 1086: Manor of Claitone granted to Ilbert de Lacy by William the Conqueror
- ▶ 1842: Clayton parish created
- ▶ 1851: Clayton Parish church built
- ▶ 1977: core of Clayton village designated a conservation area
- ▶ Suburb of Bradford, 3 miles from city centre
- ▶ Village feel; shops and amenities, houses dating from 1624, Victoria Park, Golf Club
- ▶ Source: <http://www.clayton-village.co.uk/>
- ▶ Active churches:
 - ▶ St John's C of E
 - ▶ St Anthony's RC
 - ▶ Clayton Baptist Church
 - ▶ Clayton Methodist Church
 - ▶ Gospel Hall
- ▶ Pubs:
 - ▶ The Fleece
 - ▶ The Royal
 - ▶ The Albion
 - ▶ The Black Bull
 - ▶ Clayton Conservative Club, Liberal Club
- ▶ Annual Dickensian Market – December

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Clayton demographics – 2001 Census

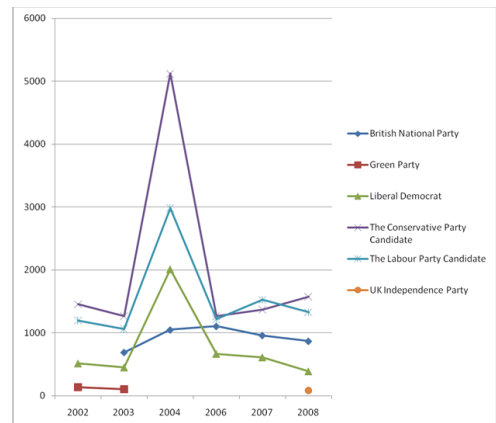
- ▶ Population 15,567
- ▶ 24.4% pensioner households
- ▶ 21.4% households couples with dependent children
- ▶ 8.0% single parent families
- ▶ Average household size 2.45
- ▶ 17.4% of households without either central heating or sole use of bath and inside toilet
- ▶ 35.6% of households have 1 or more people with a long term illness
- ▶ Ethnicity: 83.5% white; 7.2% Indian; 4.6% Pakistani
- ▶ Housing Type: 12.5% detached; 47.4% semi-detached; 29.0% terraced; 11.3% flats
- ▶ 74.3% homeowners; 16% social housing; 9.7% private rented accommodation
- ▶ 66.2% of 16-74 yr-olds are economically active. Of these, 92% are in employment; 5.2% students; 2.8% unemployed
- ▶ Of economically inactive, 40.8% are retired; 15.8% looking after home; 18.1% permanently sick or disabled
- ▶ Qualifications: 34% none; 14.2% degree level

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Clayton politics 2002-2008

Sum of Votes Cast							
Clayton & Fairweather	2002	2003	2004	2006	2007	2008	Grand Total
Green		691	1049	1106	960	869	4675
British National Party		138	107				245
Green Party		513	449	2010	665	610	4634
Liberal Democrat		1454	1267	5120	1269	1372	12060
The Conservative Party Candidate		1192	1058	2982	1218	1523	9297
The Labour Party Candidate				1116			85
UK Independence Party							
Grand Total	3297	3572	1	4258	4465	4243	30996

Adapted from: Source: <http://www.bradford.gov.uk/asp/elections2008/index.asp?w=8>
http://www.bradford.gov.uk/government_politics_and_public_administration/democracy_and_elections/local_elections/post_local_election_results.htm
 Accessed 20-06-08

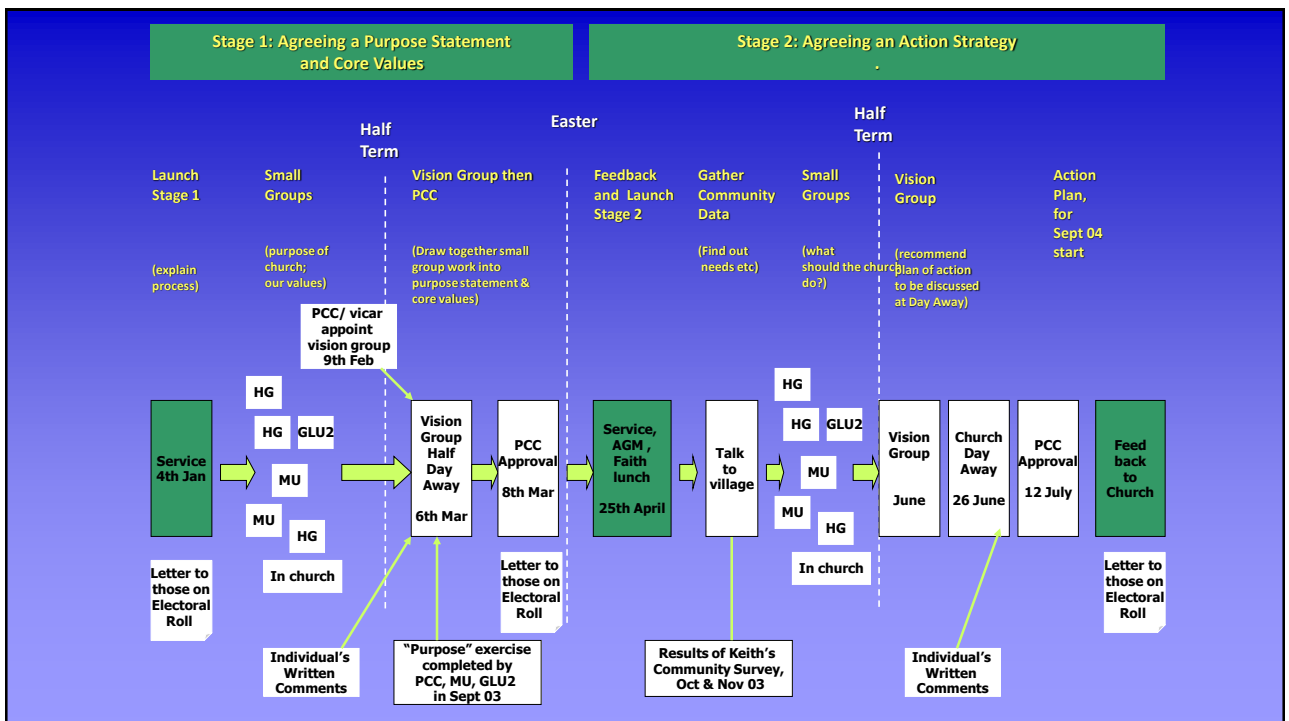


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Clayton Parish Church 2004 process

- ▶ Vision and values development process
- ▶ Introduced and led by Vicar and PCC
- ▶ Engaged with congregation through sermons, meetings, discussions
- ▶ Engaged with village residents door to door
- ▶ Results: Agreed vision and values; 5-year Action Plan

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Clayton Parish Church 2004

- ▶ In the 2004 visioning process the church agreed that the heart of what St John's stands for is to make followers of Jesus Christ. Their solution to enable people to learn more was to take part in a "Start" Christian basics course.
- ▶ Our Purpose : Making followers of Jesus Christ in Clayton and beyond, who:
 - ▶ show their love for God in worship
 - ▶ share their love for each other in fellowship
 - ▶ spread the love of Jesus in word and action.
- ▶ Our Values
 - ▶ Jesus at the centre: We encourage a maturing personal friendship with, and faith in, Jesus.
 - ▶ All Welcome: We seek to offer a welcome to all, valuing people as individuals, recognising their needs and aspirations.
 - ▶ Worship: We enjoy a variety of relevant worship styles, inspired by the Holy Spirit.
 - ▶ Involving everyone: We aim to enable everyone to recognise and use their spiritual gifts in ministry and mission.
 - ▶ Prayer: Personal and corporate prayer is at the heart of our lives and underpins our service to God.
 - ▶ Bible: The Bible is the Word of God and is therefore central to our teaching and life long learning.



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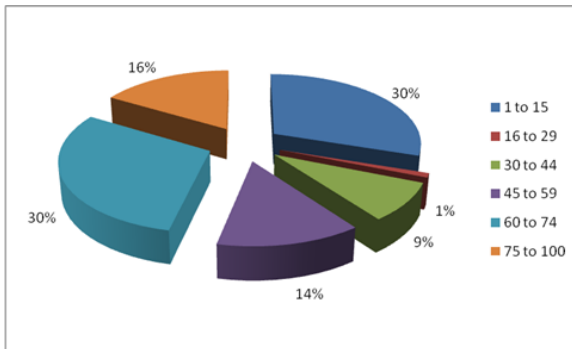
Key points: 2004-2009 Action plan

- ▶ OUT – Effective Evangelism
 - ▶ Prayer: regular meetings
 - ▶ Presence: Baptisms, Weddings, Funerals; School links; other churches; communication
 - ▶ Proclamation: Calendar, Christian Basics courses, Baptism & wedding families, Men's breakfast,
 - ▶ Persuasion: Team for range of Christian basics courses
- ▶ IN – Loving Fellowship & Deepening Discipleship
 - ▶ Nurture new Christians – Alpha, START
 - ▶ Mature Existing Christians
 - ▶ Pastoral care, building community, social events
- ▶ UP – Inspiring Worship
 - ▶ Morning Services – introduce two different services, provision for children, suitable location for children's activities,
 - ▶ Evening Service – introduce monthly café style with topical discussions
 - ▶ Create a youth band
- ▶ RESOURCING
 - ▶ Staff – encourage volunteering
 - ▶ Building – reordering, new build
 - ▶ Money – awareness

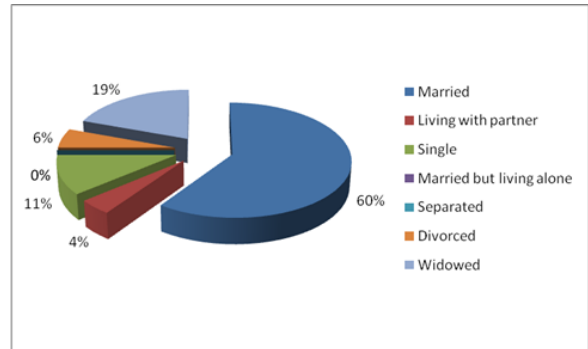
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2004 Research Results (TMcP) 1

- Age (2008 increases in 16-30's, 30-59's)



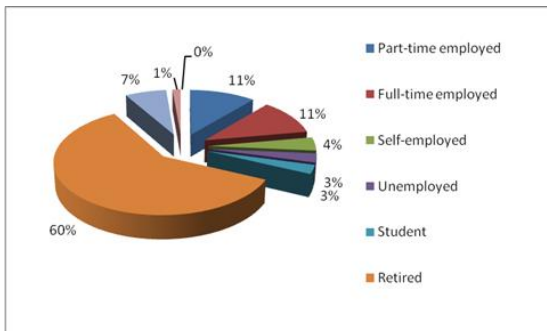
- Marital Status (2008: more singles, cohabiting)



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2004 Research Results (TMcP) 2

- Employment status (2008: employed 44%)

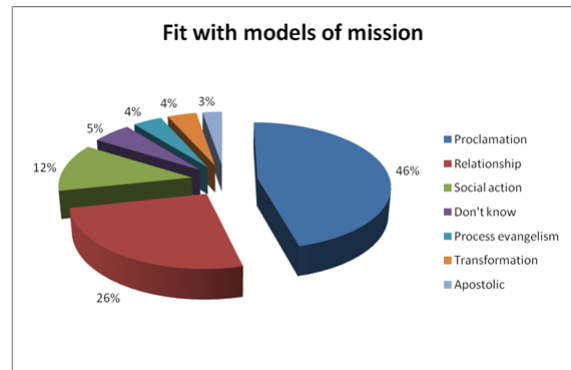
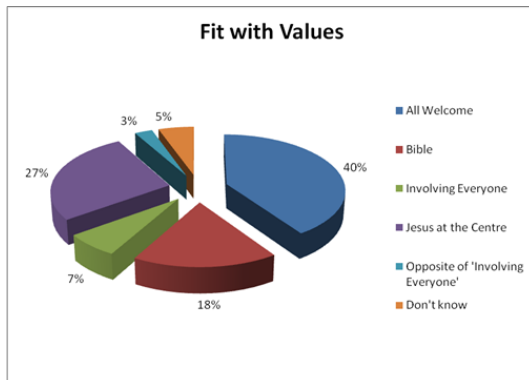


- Attended Sunday School as a child:
 - Yes: 84.7% (2008: 61 increased to 119)
 - No: 15.3%
- Attended an Alpha Course
 - Yes: 50% (2008: increased to 58.2%)
 - No: 50%
- 72 responses (2008: 141 responses)

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2008 Research Results (RD) 1

► Main role of the church in Mission?



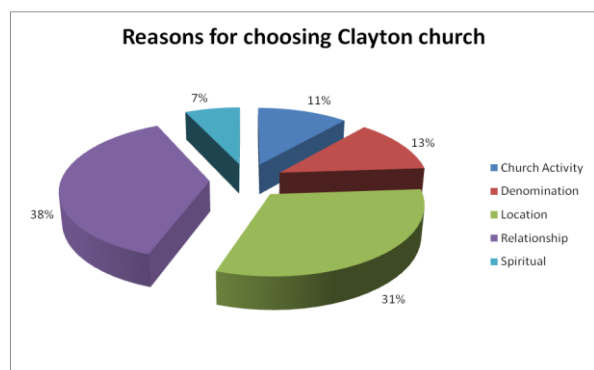
13

2008 Research Results (RD) 2

► Correlation between date of first attendance at church and first attendance at Clayton



► Why choose St John's Clayton as their Church?



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2008 Research Results (RD) Analysis

► Strengths

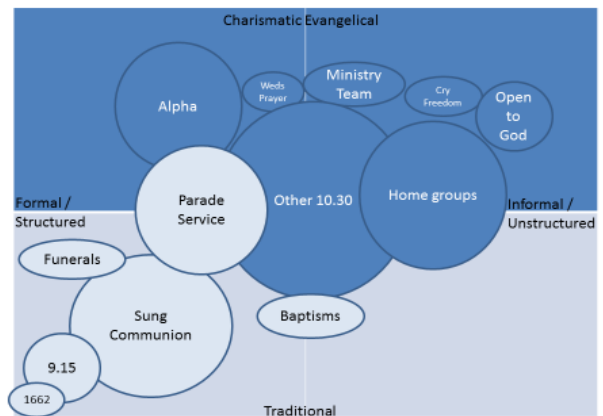
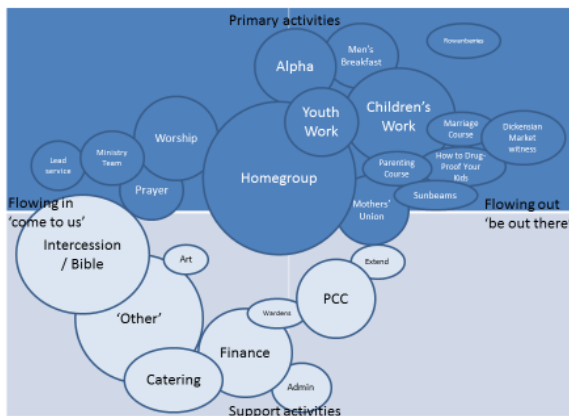
- Congregation engaged with vision process
- Growing congregation 2000-2008 +75.2%
- Alpha Course impact on confirmations
- Youth Worker appointed Sept 2008
- EXTEND programme Community Rooms
- Giving 2007: £700 (no vision); 2008: £135,000
- Events Programme, Marriage Course, HTDPYKids
- Schools relationship
- Ordination exploration
- Baptisms, Weddings, Funerals

► Weaknesses

- Differences between main Sunday services
- 23% in Home-group only; 50% of those not in Home-group involved in no activity
- Lack of overt mission focus (charitable financial support)
- Overwork of staff team (impact of EXTEND project?)
- Traditional vs Contemporary Worship styles
- Village focus, inward focus
- Finances in bank – specific purpose

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2008 Research Results: Analysis of activities



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2012 Research: Role of Events (RD MA) 1

- ▶ 72 respondents (42 Clayton)
- ▶ 58% have other family who also attend Clayton
- ▶ Geographic location more important than church tradition
- ▶ Welcoming, friendly
- ▶ Activities: Maximum 15, minimum 0; Average 4.9 activities per person over 31 listed
- ▶ Church related activity part of everyday life 29%
- ▶ Reasons for church event participation
- ▶ Social 30%; Serving the church 30%; Political reasons 41%; Learning new things 22%; Meeting new people 16%
- ▶ 6% did not meet new people at the church events they attended
- ▶ Need to work on 'deeper inclusion, connection and friendship, making new friends'
- ▶ Role of hospitality, sharing time, meals, money, possessions
- ▶ Aspirational welcoming – not reality

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Business Plan March 2013

- ▶ Aim to expand service to the community
 - ▶ Work with young people and children; in church, uniformed organisations, youth groups
 - ▶ Existing courses to support family life (HTDPYKids, Parenting courses)
 - ▶ New courses & groups (CAP money management, stress management)
 - ▶ Support for elderly, lonely, bereaved
 - ▶ Courses to strengthen Christian faith (Alpha)
 - ▶ Social / Meeting space for hire and church events (existing NHS client)
- ▶ 216 adult members
- ▶ 32,000 hours voluntary service in the community by church members every year
- ▶ Part-time youth worker
- ▶ After-school care and breakfast clubs
- ▶ Pastoral care team (church members only)

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Clayton demographics – 2011 Census

- ▶ Population 16,982 (up from 15,567)
- ▶ Increase in under 16's (25.2%)
- ▶ Index of Multiple Deprivation: 22.5 (but Clayton Estate in top 6% of most deprived areas in England)
- ▶ 2009 two major employers announced redundancies; consumer debt similar to national picture
- ▶ 17.9% of residents have a long term illness – higher than national average
- ▶ Ethnicity: white British 62.2% (down from 83.5%); Indian 7.1% (down from 7.2%); Pakistani 16.4% (up from 4.6%)
- ▶ Pockets of deprivation, with higher long-term illness and child poverty
- ▶ 24% smokers
- ▶ 20% binge drinkers
- ▶ 3 primary schools in Clayton
- ▶ Child obesity, young people alcohol misuse and drug-taking
- ▶ Divorce and family breakdown

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2011 Census and Clayton parish

- ▶ **CofE produce official parish statistics based on 2011 Census**
- ▶ Improvement in data available
- ▶ 5 most pressing issues in the parish
 - ▶ Crime and disorder – youth activities, binge drinking around pubs
 - ▶ Female life expectancy – elderly health
 - ▶ Male life expectancy – elderly health
 - ▶ Elderly deprivation – elderly activities
 - ▶ Pensioner poverty – elderly activities

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LICC

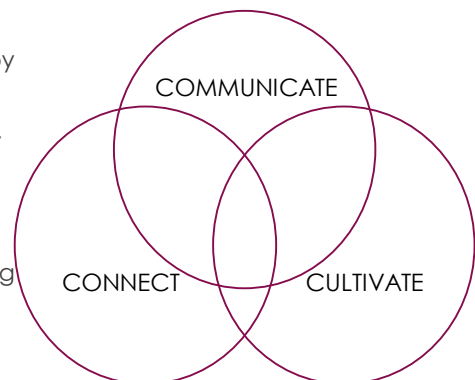
- ▶ October 2013 LICC Workshop
- ▶ Language of 'frontline' becomes embedded, supported by sermon series
- ▶ 'What will you be doing this time tomorrow?'



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LYCIG Local

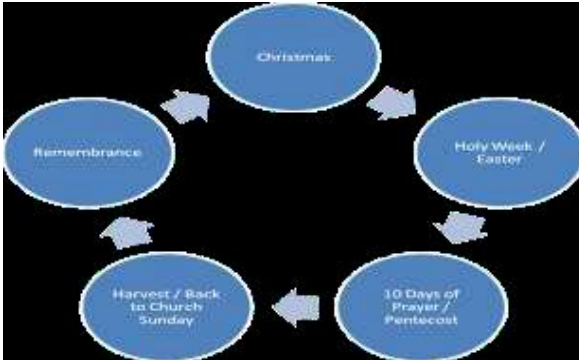
- ▶ 'Leading Your Church into Growth' – diocesan-wide initiative at local levels, sponsored by Bishop Nick, led by Robin Gamble, Diocesan Evangelist
- ▶ Process: leaders meetings, PCC backing, sermon series, small group meetings, whole church meetings
- ▶ Outcomes
- ▶ Emerging Priorities: Numerical (Social Events, Existing links, Alpha); Spiritual (strong biblical teaching, Engaging worship and corporate prayer, Discipleship groups); Service (Communicating, Follow up on events, Community action)
- ▶ Next Steps: Agree plan, priorities and responsibilities; prayer



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Mission & Ministry – rationale 1

- ▶ Programme-based processes – LICC, LYCIG Local (events)



- ▶ Sheffield Diocese's Mission strategy: annual cycle of process evangelism, based on the Five Marks of Mission, following the liturgical year
- ▶ Three identified seasons: "sowing, nurture and deepening"
- ▶ Using thematic hooks to direct the focus of teaching, integrated within supporting events activity
- ▶ Bishop Steven Croft argues that methods used (such as events), are secondary; what is central, is a double listening to and theological reflection on, scripture and culture; events become an overt 'peg' by which to hang outreach and discipleship.
- ▶ Diocese of Sheffield. Growing the Body of Christ: A Strategy for Growth for the Diocese of Sheffield 2011-2021.

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Mission & Ministry – rationale 2

- ▶ Five marks of Mission (Anglican Consultative Council, 1984; Lambeth Conference 1988)
 - ▶ To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
 - ▶ To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
 - ▶ To respond to human need by loving service
 - ▶ To seek to transform unjust structures of society
 - ▶ To safeguard the integrity of creation and to sustain the life of the earth
- ▶ Bosch, D.J. (1991) Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in the Theology of Mission (Maryknoll: Orbis Books). Difference between the faith of OT Israel and the religions of the surrounding nations
- ▶ Stephen Spencer: Filling the ark; radiating eternal truth, establishing Christendom, conversion of souls, building the kingdom on earth, finding hope in local communities
- ▶ Stephen Spencer: Galilean principles of the Missio Christi: contemplative listening, addressing society as a whole, pointing to the inaugurated yet still awaited kingdom, calling for a personal response, collaboration

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The Church's response

- ▶ AIM: to develop lay input and activity rather than reliance on clergy – facilitation role?
- ▶ Elderly
 - ▶ Services and HC at care homes (Holly Park, Oakleigh, Rowanberries)
 - ▶ Wednesday Lunch club – 2014
- ▶ Young people
 - ▶ School sessions, assemblies, Care club (after school and breakfast), youth group, uniformed organisations, part-time youth pastor
- ▶ Building resource
 - ▶ Community Rooms
- ▶ You're Welcome: You're Invited – church as event – social focus, spiritual content?
- ▶ General community
 - ▶ Dickensian market
 - ▶ Remembrance Day
 - ▶ All Souls Bereavement Service
 - ▶ Churches together for Clayton
- ▶ Specific issues
 - ▶ Debt and money management – CAP courses (5 trained to deliver CAP courses)
 - ▶ International Aid, Compassion child sponsorship – individual and corporate
- ▶ Individuals' independent activities
 - ▶ Bradford Street Angels, Inn Churches

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Other thoughts

- ▶ Inclusive mission; increase of ethnic diversity in the parish, Muslim Girls' School
- ▶ Youth work on the streets (evenings and weekends)
- ▶ Elderly population
- ▶ Collaboration with other churches in UPAs – Great Horton, food bank.
- ▶ Area of deprivation – Clayton Estate
- ▶ Extend pastoral care to Frontline, using generational links of church members
- ▶ Wider role for laity, clergy facilitation role
- ▶ Professional events management, annual planned programme of events with agreed explicit purposes
- ▶ Reality vs expressed / aspirational activity – do what the Business Plan says

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